

What is claimed is:

1. A fingerprint authentication apparatus comprising:
  - a imaging section for obtaining an image of an object to be fingerprint authenticated, using an optical image sensor having infrared sensitivity;
  - an image processing section, which performs image processing of data obtained from said imaging section and obtaining a fingerprint image; and
  - a fingerprint comparison section, which performs a comparison between said fingerprint image and a priorly stored fingerprint image.
2. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said optical image sensor is selected from a group consisting of a CCD image sensor and a CMOS image sensor, each having infrared sensitivity.
3. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising means for shining infrared light onto an object to be fingerprint authenticated.
4. A fingerprint authentication apparatus comprising:
  - 20 an imaging section comprising a first optical image sensor having infrared sensitivity and, a second optical image sensor having sensitivity in the visible light region, said first and second optical image sensors being mutually neighboring whereby obtaining an image of an object to be fingerprint authenticated;
  - 25 an image processing section, which performs image processing of data obtained from said image processing section so as to obtain the fingerprint image; and

a fingerprint comparison section, which performs a comparison between said fingerprint image and a priorly stored fingerprint image.

5. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to  
claim 4, wherein said first and second optical image  
sensors are both selected from a group consisting of a  
CCD image sensor and a CMOS image sensor, a P-well depth  
in said first optical image sensor is deeper than that of  
said second optical image sensor, and a concentration  
10 thereof is less than that of said second optical image  
sensor.

6. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to  
claim 4, wherein said first optical image sensors is  
selected from a group consisting of a CCD image sensor  
15 and a CMOS image sensor each having infrared sensitivity,  
and wherein said second optical image sensor is formed by  
providing an infrared-cutting filter on said first  
optical image sensor.

7. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to  
20 claim 4, further comprising means for shining infrared  
light and visible light onto said object to be  
fingerprint authenticated.

8. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to  
claim 1, wherein a fingerprint image is obtained with  
25 said object to be fingerprint authenticated brought into  
contact with said imaging section.

9. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to  
claim 4, wherein a fingerprint image is obtained with

said object to be fingerprint authenticated brought into contact with said imaging section.

10. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a fingerprint image is obtained with  
5 said object not in contact with said imaging section.

11. A fingerprint authentication apparatus according to claim 4, wherein a fingerprint image is obtained with said object not in contact with said imaging section.